

Krishnamurti and the Search for Light

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PREFACE.

In this book Mr. Hodson discusses the utterances of Mr. J. Krishnamurti. When he is able to assent to them he does so. When he dissents he gives his reasons. The book should be welcomed by all students of Theosophy; for here at last a fellow-student replies to Mr. Krishnamurti's long-continued condemnations of the Ancient Wisdom, The Theosophical Society, its founders inner and outer, its prominent workers and its members throughout the world.

LAWRENCE W. BURT

(p5)

INTRODUCTION.

Krishnamurti has undoubtedly brought a measure of life and light to the world. He achieves this largely by concentrating upon one aspect of life and light. He is obviously inspired with a passion for original thought and a scorn for the repetition of accepted formula. For him, tradition is anathema, the wisdom of the ages a delusion and a snare. He sees truly that humanity will never be wise, and therefore happy, until the individual thinks for himself, stands upon his own intellectual, emotional and physical feet. His message would appear to be "discover truth for yourself and by yourself." He seems either to be unaware of or deliberately to ignore the fact that without detailed guidance the majority of men are totally incapable of self-illumination.

Krishnamurti himself is uniquely individual in his views. He delves deep into his own consciousness in search of the solution of life's problems. He refuses to be guided, apparently in order to preserve the clarity of his own perception. He is an apostle of the virgin mind, the white mental sheet, the new beginning. He advocates a ruthless cutting adrift from the past. He tells us to ignore the future and be acutely focussed in the present. He wants us to live our own lives to the full, making the very most of every moment. We are to accept life's experiences, give ourselves fully yet impersonally over to them, and so realise their sublime significance.

Krishnamurti is the personification of simplemindedness. He is sincerity incarnate, and is clearly inspired with a selfless desire to lead humanity to its own light. He concentrates on individual self-knowledge, individual perfection and enlightenment. Up to now he has seemed (p7) to ignore, even to deny, the value of the path of action, of deliberate self-training, study and ministration to the world.

Unfortunately, he proclaims his to be the only way and the equally certain and most glorious path of selfless service an illusion, a way of cowardice, of escape from reality. In him, singleness of purpose has developed into intolerance. Unique individuality has become a fetish, worship of which produces narrow-mindedness and causes him to display distinct signs of intellectual

arrogance. He alone is right. Everyone else, from the Lord Buddha down to the latest teacher of the Law, is wrong, criminally wrong.

Thus it would appear that Krishnamurti is human, though in some respects above the majority of men. He has achieved the heights, and this makes the more injurious his descents into the vale. Perceiving the altitudes, those whom he influences do not always discriminate between them and the valleys, between truth and error. This is unfortunate, for one of the marked characteristics of his teaching is its unevenness, its variability.

Let us be inspired with the hope that Krishnamurti will ascend to even greater heights as a teacher and remain thereon. For he is a great man with a great message as yet but partially delivered. We are in a most critical period of world-history. We need Krishnamurti who possesses that genius, those rare qualities which make a leader and a saviour of the world. In this series of articles I comment upon Krishnamurti's teachings. I pay homage to the truth which I have been able to perceive in them. I challenge those utterances which appear to be erroneous, and on occasion I advance certain theosophical ideas.

I.--ENQUIRY.

Krishnamurti's utterances are an extraordinary blend of rare flashes of transcendental wisdom, penetrating intelligence, incomprehensibility, prejudice, intolerance and vituperation. In these chapters I offer some thoughts upon his various teachings.

I am moved to do so partly because after arrival in Australia I became aware of the influence of the teachings of Krishnamurti upon the membership of The Theosophical Society. One Lodge had just sustained severe losses in the resignation of some of its most talented and promising students.

In addition, the most prominent workers in The Theosophical Society have received in silence the continuous and vituperative denunciations of Krishnamurti. They could afford to be silent knowing that truth is certain to prevail and falsehood to be exposed.

I confess, however, that as a member of the Society, I have not always been able to achieve the philosophic calm of the leaders. The principles of justice, fair play and common courtesy have been so flagrantly outraged for some seven years that at last I am moved to a reply.

I have kept in touch with Krishnamurti's teachings, attending his gatherings when possible, and reading his published addresses. In Australia I also sought an opportunity of learning direct by (p9) what line of thought these ex-members had arrived at the conclusion that Theosophy was valueless, was indeed a hindrance in the process of self-illumination and the fulfilment of life. I sought first those truths in the teachings of Krishnamurti which had proved so enlightening. Second, I wanted to know in what way these truths differ from or are outside of Theosophy. Third, and perhaps most important, I desired to discover why one must discard Theosophy, self-purification, study and service, must resign from all movements and give up all good work in order to receive enlightenment. These for me have been important questions for some years.

Two long sessions of exposition and question and answer with one ex-fellow of the Theosophical Society who, following Krishnamurti, had resigned from various organisations, failed completely to convey one single idea to which my mind could wholly assent, saying: "this is a great truth, and one, moreover, which is outside of Theosophy"

A genuine mutual liking existed between my informant and myself, and the occasion seemed to be the most promising I had yet found; for here was one who was willing to analyse, to be questioned freely, frankly, and one moreover who, by theosophical study and self-training, was accustomed to logical processes of thought.

The first statement with which I was confronted was "that there is no purpose in life." Seeking confirmation, I w., informed that experience does not teach us anything. This is true to the doctrine of Krishnamurti, who positively affirms that there is no purpose even in suffering.

The next statement was that liberation was for all, at whatever stage in the life-process they happened to stand. whether dustman or Univer- (p10) sity professor, primitive man or genius. All could achieve immediate and complete self-fulfilment if

they would. "Why do they not do so?" I naturally asked. "Because they don't want to," was the reply. "Why do they not want to)" I asked. "Because they have not had enough experience." "Then experience has a value)"

So there we were, in the first of a succession of closed circles of thought, of contradictions from which, despite my every endeavour, it was impossible to escape. Eventually, because of this, the discussions were discontinued. My friend frankly confessed his inability to present to me a logical case. He said that my perpetual challenge of every inconsistency and contradiction rendered exposition of Krishnamurti's ideas impossible. He said that you have to take a very great deal which appears incomprehensible and illogical and hold it in your mind without immediate rejection if you would understand.

I replied that such confusion of thought, such housing of mental concepts against which reason and intuition utterly rebel would plunge me into a kind of a hell of mental confusion. Since suffering is said to be purposeless, I was not prepared to go so far. It was clear to me that, like many in the same position, my friend was himself experiencing mental darkness and anguish. As a result of cutting himself off from his friends, his life work and his highest ideals of human conduct, as so many others have done at the bidding of Krishnamurti, he found himself in misery and loneliness. He admitted this, and said that Krishnamurti taught that it was necessary to pass through this stage in order to achieve discern- (p11) ment. I could not forbear to say: "And yet experience is valueless and life has no purpose?" Happily with friendship unaffected, we were constrained to leave the matter there.

This experience would appear to be not uncommon. At Ojai, a questioner asked Krishnamurti, "Do you not see, sir, that your ideas can lead us but to one result – the blankness of negation and ineffectiveness in our struggle with the problems of life?" *

Similar confusion has arisen for many others who heroically have essayed the same path through negation and self-isolation in pursuance of the theme enunciated by Krishnamurti.

At this point I wish to make it clear that I am not judging the case. I do not feel competent to do so. Such heroism may produce heroic results, despite the fact that Krishnamurti constantly warns against any course of conduct with a view to attainment.

Here are his words on the subject: "When we understand profoundly the significance of our existence, of the process of ignorance and action, we will see what we call purpose has. no significance. The mere search for the purpose of life covers up, detracts from the comprehension of oneself." *

That quotation is a perfect example of the closed circle of thought outside of which I for one continually find myself to be shut when endeavouring to comprehend these teachings. For the opening clause, "When we understand profoundly the significance of our existence," is for me the end, not the beginning of the search.

This phenomenon is constant throughout all Krishnamurti's expositions. He seems to me to

* Ojai 1936 Talks, p. 108.

* Ojai 1936 Talks, p. 28. (p12) put the very goal itself as the first step towards its attainment. If I may presume to say so, of one so much greater than myself, he does not appear to appreciate the enormous gulf between himself as a very great and illuminated being and the rest of humanity in which he appears to be trying to initiate the process of thinking for itself.

Krishnamurti himself apparently finds little or no favourable response from those whom he addresses. Evidently they find, as I do myself, their existent mental equipment unequal to the task of following the exceedingly abstruse concepts of which his talks are presumed to be expositions.

Here, for example, is a question put to him in various forms more than once: "I have listened to your talks for several years, but to be frank, I have not yet grasped what you are trying to convey." The answer, as usual, is itself as unacceptable (to me!) as the teachings which produced the question. Krishnamurti says, "All that I am trying to do is to help you to discern for yourself that there is no salvation outside of yourself, that no Master, no society can save you." * Obviously that is not all he is trying to tell us; for such a statement is to be found in every one of the world religions and philosophies, and especially is it part of the

central message of the one society which Krishnamurti has singled out as the chief target for his arrows of criticism and iconoclasm – The Theosophical Society.

What is wrong? Who is at fault, if fault there be? Are we not expected to understand? Is the whole purpose to throw us into a profound

* Question and part of an answer, p. 4I, 1936 Ojai Talks.

(p13) mental confusion out of which enlightenment will emerge.

For Krishnamurti, the whole world and, therefore, his audiences, his questioners, and especially 'the continually vilified leaders and members of The Theosophical Society – all these are wrong, are knaves and fools, whilst he alone is right. At least, so he continually seems to suggest.

What is to be done about this? I can find but one answer. We must bring the best powers of heart and mind to bear upon Krishnamurti's teaching. We must respect his greatness, and approach his message – even if he denies that he has one – without bias, or, if possible, with a leaning towards his way of thought.

He himself demands much more. He says that one must discard every opinion, every belief, all knowledge wrested from life, throw overboard every experience however lofty, beautiful, ennobling and profound. For all these are contemptuously dismissed by him as superstitious beliefs, self-deceits and ways of escape from reality. As long as we hold to one single idea which life has made true for us we cannot know the truth. We must become mentally virginal. We must render our minds like a white sheet. Then, perhaps, but certainly not till then, a faint glimmer of light may dawn upon us.

Since Krishnamurti so greatly stresses it, let us examine this concept of self-denudation. Students of the Ancient Wisdom know full well that two major psychological changes quite naturally both precede and accompany illumination. They consist first of psychological simplification, and second of self-unification, or the fusion of hitherto separated aspects of human nature into (p14) a unit. As a result of the first change, personal desire gradually disappears. The individual "wants" no more. Emotionally and intellectually he becomes independent of externals, for he has found a well-spring of life, of happiness and of truth within himself. His feelings become pure, white, still. His intellect is free of supposition, free of doubt, "simple," calm, direct. His mind, freed from a confusion of externally imposed creeds, dogmas and beliefs, is established in recognition of – not obsession by – certain basic metaphysical formula which have become for him the keys of life, his theo-sophia. The second change of self-unification, or the fusion of emotion and intellect into a single centre of awareness and action quite naturally accompanies this.

Clear-minded and unified, the individual has symbolically become "as a little child."

If one understands Krishnamurti rightly, he insists on bringing this condition about by force, artificially as it were. There must be positive action to eject all previous concepts of life. "When we begin to free ourselves, through experiment, from these false divisions with their special significances, pursuits and ideals, which have caused so much harm and falsely complicated our lives, then we shall release creative energy and discover the endless movement of life." *

My own idea of this self-clarification is that it is entirely a natural process; it is the result of interior changes, of the unfoldment of the life within. It is, therefore, not forced. Indeed, it seems doubtful whether it can be brought about artificially. Rather is it an inevitable occurrence,

* Ojai Talks, p. 7, para. 4. (p15) utterly spontaneous, perfectly natural, even thoughtless, or, at any rate, thought-free. Tagore beautifully expresses the spontaneity of this change in his words: "He who can open the bud, does it so simply."

Perhaps the most phenomenal concomitant of this condition of spiritual "budding" is its physical result. The karma of material adversity begins to be outworn. In consequence, although no direct effort is ever made to obtain even the necessities of physical life, the "new-born" is never in need. All his wants are supplied, sometimes in abundance. Symbolically, the kings of the earth unite to lay their treasures at the Christ Child's feet.

What remains after this interior death and rebirth? That which remains is the individual centre of awareness. But the word "individual" does not imply separated individuality. For one of the great experiences which follow the process of denudation is the progressive fading of the sense of separateness. A state of unity with all is entered, first, in exhilarating flashes, and later as a permanent condition of consciousness.

This individual centre of consciousness, this sublimated selfhood, displays three attributes or powers – those of intuition, reason and will. Intuition and reason are gradually fused into one, and they, with the fruit of their combined activity, remain as constituent attributes of the new-born Self.

The third attribute of the Self consists of an awakened and burning will to know, to ascend, to conquer. This arises from fathomless depths within the centre of existence. Its presence and activity is experienced as a continuous and mounting determination to break all fetters, (p16) pierce all resistance to its own free, full and perfect manifestation. Once awakened it never sleeps. Although its decrees may not always be ratified in action, especially at first, such temporary frustration has no effect upon it. Ever the will to victory mounts to become the one increasing purpose of life, the one exalting power.

Though concentrated at burning-glass intensity in the individual, this will is known by him as impersonal, universal and in this resides its potency. Unconquerable, undiminished, pertaining to eternity, it becomes the fiery centre upon which individual existence is established.

Thus the One Will crowns, completes the three-fold centre of awareness in man which remains when all else has been "slain." Intuition, reason and the intellectual light – which is the result of their blended activity – these, fused in. and empowered by the fire of will, these remain.

Krishnamurti appears to carry this process very much further. Apparently the very thought of an ideal, a quest or any purpose in life is anathema to him. One in whom the awakening of the will to fulfilment has begun, who sees the goal of liberation before him and is moving deliberately towards it, cannot possibly comply with his demand for interior emptiness, agnosticism as an essential to illumination.

As to will-consciousness Krishnamurti says little. But he does demand as an essential to illumination, at least as a result of listening to him, the complete ejection from the centre of awareness of all memory and all the distilled essence of the fruits of life's experiences. Apparently everything must go, and, moreover, the future is mortgaged. In his own words: "When a man says, 'I know,' he is dead." One must neither (p17) remember one's own past nor be interested in one's future. One must not admit of or answer to interior illumination outside of his views, and one must not employ reason when listening to him. Apparently one must listen with empty, actionless mind and purposeless will. At least, that is the impression I receive when listening to him or reading his utterances.

This negation appears to me to be implicit if not fully expressed. For if one does apply reason to certain of his teachings one must reject them as illogical and unsound. His denunciation of Theosophy as untrue, as poison, and, by implication, of a person like his "mother," Dr. Besant, as an exploiter of the people, is an example. This denunciation is impossible of acceptance by any individual who has studied and tested against life the one and has truly comprehended the other. To deny the Ancient Wisdom to a mind illuminated by it is comparable to denial of the existence and value of the sun to forms which derive from it their life and energy. For, throughout all ages the Ancient Wisdom has been as the sun to the unfolding mind of man. Yet Krishnamurti does deny the Ancient Wisdom albeit in terms which suggest that he knows little or nothing of its true light, its profundity and its beauty. "... Schools of thought are nothing but imitative jargons which merely create divisions and encourage exclusiveness and vanity of mind. These systems of thought have really no validity, being founded on illusion." *

Dr. Besant was one of the greatest women and greatest servants of humanity of this age, and one moreover who dearly loved and

* Ojai Talks 193 –, p. 5, para. 4. (p18) deeply revered Krishnamurti. In the face of his denial of Theosophy and his denunciation of Dr. Besant, both intuition and reason, stimulated by moral indignation, forbid either positive acceptance or empty-mindedness.

In succeeding chapters I propose to continue this consideration of Krishnamurti's teaching. I shall frankly challenge him and them as he bids us challenge. Where they appear to me to be incompatible with reason and fact I shall respectfully declare them so. I hope very much that others will participate, particularly those who claim to have found the light through Krishnamurti. For it seems to me that it cannot be right and good at this critical period of history for someone to travel continuously about the world producing confusion of thought wherever he goes. (p19)

2. TEST.

In the first chapter of this book I opened a discussion of the teachings of Krishnamurti. I frankly confessed that, in common, apparently, with large numbers of others, I have found myself unable to accept many of those teachings. I even went so far as to suggest that the extraordinary confusion of thought which he is causing everywhere he goes might be productive of great harm.

I believe that the majority of his hearers and supporters are, or were, Fellows of the Theosophical Society. They are people who have at least some background of philosophic thought. They know what liberation, the one Life, the Life Force, mind-heart, the "I" consciousness may be presumed to mean. One would think that this knowledge would help them in understanding, both his use of such terms and his purpose in travelling continuously about the world.

Krishnamurti thinks otherwise. He constantly affirms that the background, the process of study, the effort to understand the meaning and purpose of life which Theosophy inculcates – all these are a positive hindrance to the attainment of true discernment.

I have often wondered what his words can mean to those of his listeners who have no back ground whatever, who have given no consideration to the concepts implied by the words referred to above. Do they experience a greater or a less confusion of mind than that of the theosophist listener? Is it possible that the very virginal state of their mentality is an advantage to them?

This is a point upon which enlightenment would be valuable. For it cannot be denied that (p20) one who has had certain definite experiences which have profoundly changed for the better his whole life cannot accept affirmations which positively deny both the experience and its source.

Let us take for example the question of direct experience of the immortality of the Soul, or, as it is put theosophically, causal consciousness. When this comes, whether as a result of meditation or as a sudden exaltation, the problem of the life after death is instantly and finally solved. The Self is known as undying and indestructible. It is also known as completely distinct from the body.

Denials of the existence of such a centre of awareness and of such an experience can make no impression upon those who have known the one and have passed through the other. They are impervious to a teacher who does deny either the possibility or the value of such a basic experience.

Take, again, the question of help received as a result of joining a society, a church for example. I personally passed through an experience at my confirmation as a schoolboy which profoundly influenced me at the time and still is a living power in my life. All that was highest and best in me was then strengthened, all that was undesirable was weakened. Though I may be far from having fully lived up to the experience, it has been of the greatest value to me, particularly in great trials and temptations. This experience is renewed for me every time I receive Holy Communion. I rise from the Lord's Table uplifted, refreshed spiritually and with my mind clarified and unusually alert.

I therefore love the Christian Church and its Sacraments. I am profoundly grateful to the (p21) Church for this and similar experiences which it has helped to bring to me. Whilst admitting the evils of priestcraft, I can never assent to the wholesale condemnation of religions, churches and priests to which Krishnamurti gives expression. I know of many noble and splendid men in the priesthood, and I know of the value of their lives to those who come into contact with them. I also know that very great numbers of people have had exaltations, spiritual reorientation and self-correction through participation in the services and

Sacraments of the Christian Church.

Such people would be false to the very highest within themselves, would be traitors to a spiritual principle, if they gave assent to the denials and fulminations of a religious iconoclast. It is neither just nor fair to ask or expect them to do so. Particularly is it unfair to condemn them and even indict them as exploiters, and to class them and the whole body of the priesthood with all the most evil people in the world. Yet this is what Krishnamurti continually does.

Take also the question of the existence of the Masters of the Wisdom and the value of the experience of communion with one or more of Them and of becoming an agent for Their superior powers.

The individual for whom this is a reality is at a distinct disadvantage when trying to understand Krishnamurti. For not only does he constantly condemn the whole concept of the discipleship, but he also says that "discernment" is impossible to one for whom such an association is a living fact. He seems to impute a selfish motive to everyone concerned in the experience. He seems also to think that anyone who accepts the idea of the Masters does so solely because a (p22) "leader" has told him to do so. He appears to reject entirely the possibility of any direct experience. The Masters Themselves and all Their senior pupils are exploiters and all other disciples and aspirants are voluntarily subscribing to a pernicious system of exploitation.

According to Krishnamurti's views, the supreme enlightenment of the Lord Buddha is a sham. Nothing of value to Himself or to the world occurred under the Bo-Tree at Buddha Gaya. The whole story has been spread abroad by the Lord Buddha and His disciples as a means of exploiting the people. Krishnamurti would have us believe that the teachings of the Lord Buddha are an imposture. The meaning and purpose of life, the cessation of sorrow, reincarnation, karma, dharma, the noble eightfold Path, arhatship, Adeptship and Buddhahood—all this pure theo-sophia is poison. The Lord Buddha Himself and every other teacher of these doctrines before and since His advent are poisoners. * The Bodhisattva Maitreya, known as the Lord Christ to the West, announced Successor to the Lord Buddha, frankly perpetuates this evil, exists but to despoil humanity of happiness, wisdom, fulfilment.

Furthermore, according to Krishnamurti, those millions of people who since the founding of Buddhism and throughout the ages have found courage, strength, intellectual and spiritual light and exaltation in the great body of theo-sophia are all deceived. There is no courage, strength, intellectual and spiritual light and exaltation to be attained as a result of knowledge of the plan of life, the unfoldment of the Divine in Nature and in man and the goal of perfection to which that

* See Page 31. (p23) unfoldment leads. All this is delusion, "a system of thoughtlessness," a net of illusion in which the mind of humanity is hopelessly enmeshed as a result of exploitation by those whom it has regarded as its spiritual superiors.

Such are the logical conclusions to be drawn from the words of Krishnamurti. In the people, the motive, says Krishnamurti, is fear, desire for comfort and escape from reality. In their teachers and leaders from the Lord Buddha downwards it is a thirst for power, spiritual ambition and pride.

To those to whom the ideal of discipleship appeals, he says: "You who are seeking satisfaction, what you call happiness, truth, become their tools, and are exploited by these teachers, leaders, and their societies." * He also assumes that discipleship means dependence upon a Master by Whom one could be led to Truth, which, of course, never was or could be part of the ideal.

Here it must be admitted that any listener who, in full awareness has more than once stood in the presence of a Master, who has found himself able to understand, to teach, to enlighten and to heal his fellow-men far more effectively as a result of these experiences than was possible before they came to him – such a person cannot assent to denials of the validity of such experiences in human life. Such denials run counter to a living fact within the listener's own certain knowledge. He knows that as a result of that fact his whole heart opened out more fully in impersonal love for his fellow-men, in a more profound compassion and tenderness for all who suffer, for children, the aged, the sick, the downtrodden and the poor. He observes that during

* P. 32, Ojai, 1936. (p24) the years of his association with the Master, faculties, both of comprehension and of self-expression have been greatly enhanced. He is not deluded into thinking that the Master bestowed these faculties upon him from outside.

He knows perfectly well that they were inherent in him from the beginning.

The sun does not bestow upon the plant the power of producing the flower and the seed. Sunshine, however, plays a most important part in the manifestation of that power. Similarly for the disciple, his Master is as a spiritual sun. Indeed, the experience of entering the presence of an Adept is very like that of entering a great light, a centre of spiritual radiance, of power and bliss. Such entrance increases the disciple's own light and power. He experiences his own interior bliss which often is conveyed to others, lightening the burden of their lives and in some cases, not at all rare, reproducing in them the intellectual awakening, the clarity of thought and perception which he himself enjoys.

Those for whom such experiences are a part of the fabric of their existence cannot possibly bring to his teachings that absence of ideas and concepts which Krishnamurti demands from his hearers as an essential to comprehension. It is of no value, it seems to me, to condemn those who from life have wrested certain knowledge: to condemn that knowledge itself as "beliefs" and "self-protective memories, assertions, assumptions." To assert that these are barriers to discernment is to put those who have their own knowledge founded upon direct experience completely beyond the possibility of comprehending Krishnamurti's teachings.

If against this statement it is urged that one does not, cannot know these things direct; that (p25) one is depending upon leaders, is self-deceived, and that when the test comes, one's whole scheme of thought will fail one, I can give a personal testimony to the contrary. I had been a member of The Theosophical Society for two years only when the Great War broke out. I had grasped to some extent the scheme of thought presented in theosophical literature. I knew of the meaning and purpose of life, of reincarnation, karma, and the existence within myself of all that is essential to the fulfilment of my life, and had learned that in the acid test I must rely on my own interior life and power alone. For me, as for tens of thousands of my fellow-students of Theosophy, blind groping had begun to be displaced by intelligent, purposeful living. This was not all book knowledge. Meditation had brought its meed of interior realisation. I had discovered and had begun to drink at the inexhaustible well-spring of life within.

All this was to be put to severe and prolonged tests. Weeks and months of life under shell-fire, under aerial bombing by night and by day; reconnaissances and actions under fire; long successions of sleepless nights – all these continued until the strain became intolerable. Fear, sheer physical trembling fear, became the ever-present spectre. Friends died by one's side, blown to pieces, burnt to death. Others died of horrible wounds, and others went home shaken and shattered in both body and mind.

Throughout all this, Theosophy, especially its affirmation of the immortality and indestructibility of the Self, remained as the one unshakable belief, a rock of ages upon which the mind could and did rest, and resting, drew forth strength and stability which at least prevented outward surrender to fear. (p26) During periods of relative rest, meditation on the great theosophical verities never failed to re-orient and to re-establish the mind and will upon the centre within. One text from the Bhagavad Gita proved full of power in times of need: it is the great affirmation that: "He who seeth Me in everything and everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold and he shall never lose hold of Me."

How can one deny such vital experiences in one's life? What can one say to a teacher who proclaims them superstitions and delusions and brands as exploiters those who affirm them?

These are questions with which the student of Theosophy inevitably finds himself faced when he listens to Krishnamurti. Either there are logical answers to them or there are not. If there are, they would be most welcome. (p27)

3. EXPLOITATION.

In the last chapter I referred to direct experience of theosophical teachings as facts in Nature. I mentioned the experience of discipleship and Krishnamurti's wholesale condemnation of this most ancient, universal and beautiful ideal. Reasons for condemnation of misapplications of this ideal can readily be seen. There are dangers associated with every great adventure, whether material or spiritual. Everest has its ice-walls, crevasses, avalanches, its fierce gales, and its blizzards. Men have perished in attempts to reach the summit. Happily, however, the dangers do not discourage others imbued with the same great spirit of adventure, of sublime aspiration. Indeed, the dangers themselves add to the attractiveness of all great quests.

So also the Everest of the soul, the mountain top within. The ascent of man towards great spiritual heights, aspiration to know and learn from Those Mighty Ones Who abide upon their summits – this great adventure also has its perils. Here, too, the path leads "twixt cliffs of ice and iron" as every determined aspirant soon discovers. Since Krishnamurti so strongly discountenances the whole idea of the Way of Holiness, the Path of Discipleship and Initiation, let us look at some of the perils which beset the Soul who seeks to tread that path.

First, it is important to remember that these dangers are not inherent in the path of discipleship itself. They arise from individual perversions of the ideal. Recognition of the possibility of such errors in no way constitutes derogation of one of the noblest ideals by which the mind of man can be inspired.

What are the dangers, if any, inherent in the (p28) experience of contact with a perfect man? Foremost, perhaps, idolatry – the worship of a perfected personality – its elevation to the position of a god. Against this the Masters have steadfastly warned those who aspire to serve under Them. But it must be admitted that aspirants have been known to fall into this error – one which is readily understandable in view of the enormous evolutionary gulf between the god-like perfection of the Adept and the human limitations of the devotee.

Next of the dangers are pride, self-conceit, the "holier than thou" attitude.

Next, the warping of the growth of the Soul. The power of the Adept is said to be so great, His light so dazzling that there may be a danger that the Soul should lose its own individual integrity and become a slavish imitation of that which seems to it so noble, so high. If I understand him aright, this is Krishnamurti's chief objection to the concept of discipleship. He would seem to suggest that, instead of growing by his own inherent power, according to his own spiritual design and towards his own unique attainment, the individual might attempt slavishly to imitate the Master and so miss the experience of making manifest his own spiritual creativeness and of attaining to his own unique fulfilment.

Personally, whilst recognising the others – indeed, observing signs of them in the followers of Krishnamurti – I doubt profoundly the existence of this last danger, particularly when the teacher is a true Adept. The sun does not impart to or impose upon the plant its own glory; Such is an impossibility even to the sun. Sunshine assists the plant in the production of its own unique flower, its own fragrance and its own seed. (p29) So also the Master, Who is to the disciple as a spiritual Sun in Whose radiance his powers rapidly unfold.

Even if we grant the existence of all these dangers, they do not justify, I submit, the wholesale condemnation either of the Way of Holiness itself or of the aspiration of the Soul of man to discipleship. Concerning the wisdom, love and compassion of the Master Himself by Whom and in Whom that aspiration is fulfilled, it is indeed difficult to justify the uncompromising denunciations of Krishnamurti. Justice, reason, gratitude and respect all seem to me to be outraged in such a condemnation of those Adepts Who at this time still take, and from time immemorial have taken, disciples.

Great World Teachers, such as the Lord Buddha and the Lord Christ, Themselves encouraged men and women to seek the heights to which They had ascended. To aid them, These Great Ones drew men near Themselves as disciples. Many others among the company of the Adepts perpetuate this practice. Many great servants of humanity have borne testimony to the priceless value of the experience of entering directly the Presence of a perfected man. It 'would seem reasonable, therefore, to conclude that despite the dangers, there are inestimable advantages to the individual and to the race in the attainment by man of the stages of soul growth known as discipleship, Initiation and Adeptship.

It is indeed strange that Krishnamurti, who has written books of the greatest wisdom and beauty on this very subject, who has personally led many to the feet of the Masters, should in this later phase of his activities now condemn that which once he so highly praised. It is evident that a (p30) most radical psychological change has occurred in him. In that change most probably lies the whole secret of so much that is difficult of comprehension in the later phase of his life and work.

The other reasons which he himself gives for his condemnations of his own earlier ideas and teachings are also difficult to follow. He seems to assume that everyone who seeks the way of discipleship does so through motives of fear, of desire for comfort or escape from reality, for spiritual rewards and for gratification of selfconceit. Yet he himself, in common with all other

authoritative writers, states in his earlier books upon the subject of the spiritual life that these motives would themselves constitute impassable barriers on the path of discipleship. He, therefore, both denies to every aspirant to spiritual light a state of purity of heart and accuses each and every one of them, from the first disciple on earth to the most recent, of the stupidity of being moved by motives which would inevitably render their quest abortive from its inception – a strong and sweeping accusation indeed I

Krishnamurti even goes farther than this – very much farther. He constantly uses the word "exploitation" as a kind of philosophic club with which to smite the heads of all those who have ever sought and still seek to help others along the path which leads to the Masters' feet. In this category he presumably includes the Adepts Themselves.

Discussing the utter incompatibility of his teachings with those expounded by theosophists, he is reported to have said recently in Mexico: "You cannot give poison from one side and the remedy from the other; that is to say, give with one hand what I call poison – organisation, discipleship, Masters; and with the other the remedy (p31) – the remedy against fear, against lack of understanding and intelligence. On the one hand you say: Religions are marvellous, necessary; and authority also is necessary for spiritual growth; you say that it is necessary that you should become disciples of the Masters. And then you turn and speak of Krishnamurti who is opposed to all that. One thing is a poison and the other is something that is real; I do not wish that the two things should be mixed."

Apart from the declaration that Theosophy, Masterhood and the Masters are poison and by inference all active theosophists from the remotest ages to the present day are poisoners, one might well enquire for his basis for the words "authority also is necessary for spiritual growth." During twenty-seven years of membership of The Theosophical Society I have heard only the contrary. Man reaches fulfilment by virtue of the release of the life and light within him; this is what I have learned during a prolonged study of Theosophy and long association with theosophists.

If we are to take Krishnamurti literally, all great spiritual leaders from the beginning of the world, all saints and holy men, all teachers of the Ancient Wisdom, all who have given and still give their lives for the helping of humanity, are exploiters of the people. He will not grant them one virtue. He calls their teachings poison, and their principles pernicious. By assumption, all the great body of spiritual teachers, who have appeared in the world up to now, are all rogues and self-seeking hypocrites, whilst he alone among them is pure. An astounding phenomenon, indeed!

What is the student to think in the face of such an amazing situation as this? I do not (p32) answer. I invite answers. I seek understanding; but in the seeking very definitely I am not going to cast away the highest, the holiest, the most beautiful experiences of life. I cannot turn my back upon the great teachers, ancient and modern, who have shed their light upon the world. To do so would be both grave discourtesy and base ingratitude.

Since, however, I have so long admired and respected Krishnamurti, I give serious attention to his accusations. Particularly do I give attention to his use of the word "exploiters" in connection with such people as Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, Dr. Besant, C. W. Leadbeater and their successors. I have looked at these people with unbiassed eyes. I have watched closely for any signs whatever of self-seeking and "exploitation" in the conduct of their lives and in their relations with their fellowmen, especially with those who have felt most intimately drawn to them. Dispassionately and with every opportunity of knowing the facts, with Krishnamurti's arraignment before me, I have presumed to judge The Theosophical Society, its founders, its leaders and all those tens of thousands who love and serve under them. I give my verdict unhesitatingly.

It is: "Not Guilty."

I believe that these people are working for one object only – to bring to the world the realisation of the fact of the Brotherhood of Man and the other sublime teachings of the Ancient Wisdom.

Furthermore, I affirm that in spite of the difficulties which certain of Krishnamurti's teachings create, in spite of the vituperative attacks of one (p33) who has been much beloved by them, they are succeeding.

A study of modern thought, scientific, philosophic and spiritual, demonstrates unmistakably that the sixty-four years of work of The Theosophical Society in promulgating these truths is bearing fruit. Happily the mind of modern man is gradually – all too

gradually, but quite definitely – becoming theosophised. And in this lies the hope and the safety of the world in the face of the threat of cataclysmic war.

Historians of the future will, I feel sure, see in this relatively small Society of ours a movement of immense significance for the whole of humanity. Further I affirm that anyone who denies this can only do so because they have neither realised the true work of The Theosophical Society nor gained any due comprehension through study of the sublime teachings of Theosophy. (p34) Hodson1 - 4.Incompr Krishnamurti and the Search for Light

4. INCOMPREHENSIBILITY.

IV.– INCOMPREHENSIBILITY.

In the preceding chapter I referred to the denunciations of The Theosophical Society, its leaders, inner and outer, and its whole membership, which are a constantly recurring feature of Krishnamurti's exposition of his ideas. In this chapter I refer to another exceedingly strange phenomenon observable throughout his work. This consists of the confusion of thought into which he throws so many of those who listen to him. Question after question shows that after seven years or more people are still unable to grasp either what he is trying to say or in what way his teachings may be practically applied to life. A significant phrase occurs in the "Newsletter," of March, 1937. There we read that "after the many discussions a certain sense of their futility became apparent."

Here is a typical question illustrative of the sense of futility produced in Krishnamurti's listeners: "If we are not to have ideals, if we must be rid of the desire to improve ourselves, to serve God and our less fortunate fellow-beings, what, then, is the purpose of living? Why not just die and be done with it?"

I will not quote the whole of the reply, which can be read. Here is the first part of it. "What I have said concerning ideals is this: that they become a convenient means of escape from the conflict of life, and thus they prevent the comprehension of oneself." *

Is there not something cruelly cynical in thus turning to disrepute the very highest attributes and aspirations of which man is capable by branding them as "convenient means of escape"

* Talks at Ojai 1936, p. 50. (p35) and by imputation branding all idealists as cowards? According to Krishnamurti, philanthropy, purity of motive and courage are unknown in the world, especially amongst idealists.

Here is another typical question: "I have listened to your talks for several years, but to be frank, I have not yet grasped what you are trying to convey. Your words have always seemed vague to me, whereas the writings of H.P.B., Rudolph Steiner, Annie Besant and a few others have greatly helped me...." *

One explanation of this phenomenon offered by his followers is that Krishnamurti's incomprehensibility is a sign of his greatness; that if his teachings were easy to understand they would be without value. My reply to this would scarcely be good English. I can, however, say that every great teacher that has preceded him has succeeded in awakening human intuition and enlightened human minds by clear and simple phrases, many of which have come down to us as models of clarity of thought, as utterances pregnant with wisdom. Where abstruse ideas and profound occult and philosophic verities are taught, meditation and close study enable the student to grasp them. Personally, though I have consulted many, I have yet to meet anyone who can tell me, in a comprehensive way, the general purport of Krishnamurti's teaching. In the main, people seem to be in the same position, either as that so frankly avowed by the questioners quoted above, or as the friend referred to in the first chapter of this book.

Personally, I do not for a moment deny or forget that Krishnamurti has given us certain very lofty ideas, nor do I wish here to give the

* Ojai 1936, p. 41. (p36) impression that because teaching is difficult it is therefore not exalted. Indeed, I am fully aware that comprehension of great spiritual truths demands a certain stillness of the analytical mind and an alertness of the intuition. Many times, by the very process of trying to listen by the intuition, however imperfectly developed, I myself have received unforgettable flashes of illumination from Krishnamurti.

Indeed, I feel that we should endeavour thus to listen to him. For occasionally there shines out an illuminating truth, a thought, sharp and keen as a sword.

I may be wrong, but it has seemed to me that in latter years these occasions have become rarer. One last question may be quoted, which would seem to support the possibility that Krishnamurti is becoming less comprehensible as his mission proceeds: "Last Sunday you seemed very uncertain in what you said, and some of us could make nothing of it. Several of my friends say that they are not coming any more to hear you, because you are becoming vague and undecided about your own ideas. Is this impression due to lack of understanding in us, or are you not as sure of yourself as you used to be?"

The answer to this question may be read on page 21 of Ojai Talks 1936. It consists of partial admission of inability precisely to express his ideas in words. According to Krishnamurti's habitual custom, it also throws the onus upon the questioner, suggesting that the blame for the lack of comprehension is largely his own. As I have said, Krishnamurti blames their impurity of "mind-heart," their desire for escape, superstition and beliefs, for his hearers' inability to comprehend him. (p37) Is it possible that Krishnamurti is so great that no one can understand him? Can it be that his ideas are so lofty that he cannot put them into words? Is it also possible that his illumination is so transcendental that no one who is not similarly illumined can share in it? Is it that both he and his ideas are so far ahead of the times that the human mind in its present state cannot hope to gain very much from his teachings? Is he speaking to future generations who will perceive and acclaim that to which we of this age are so strangely blind. Is he a spiritual Einstein addressing a humanity still in the kindergarten?

Certain phrases and mental attitudes of his would seem to give ground for such a possibility. He himself has said that if three people out of the whole of humanity could understand him he would be satisfied. Whether this minute proportion, this smallness of his hopes is due to the exalted nature of his teachings or the stupidity of mankind, we are not informed.

Against one error I would strongly warn all who listen to Krishnamurti – that is the error of the dog in Aesop's Fable: He let the substance fall in the hope of grasping the shadow.

During the seven or more years of Krishnamurti's later mission I have seen many promising lives rendered tragically fruitless, many hopes destroyed, and many good servants of humanity lost to that service. Under Krishnamurti's influence they have thrown overboard the whole of life's experiences, life's illuminations, and life's understanding. Religion, philosophy, ethics, and even morals – on all these they have turned a scornful back. They have done this in the utterly vain belief that by so doing they will gain some mysterious enlightenment hitherto hidden from them. (p38) I have seen noble-hearted, pure-minded men and women, both young and old, throw over their previous moral restraint, cast aside that discipline of life without which there can be no happiness. I have watched them cease from a service to those less fortunate than themselves, which hitherto had made their lives noble and fruitful.

All this they do, as they suppose, at the bidding of Krishnamurti.

Krishnamurti may be performing one useful function in the world. By his abuse, his denials, his condemnations, he may force us to put our own knowledge again to the test. But when he publicly declares that the Ancient Wisdom is invalid, poisonous, pernicious; when he affirms that he and he alone is showing to the world the way to truth, then I for one must part company with him.

The whole world knows him now. Humanity awaits the deliverance of his message. A world expectant, a world in direst need and danger looks to him for light. The opportunity is unique; the need, the danger unequalled in the history of the globe. He has the ear of the world. After seven years of iconoclasm will he not begin to construct, to teach, to lead the world to that which he has found? The times are indeed critical. The nations are at the cross-roads. One way leads to tyranny, aggression, exploitation, persecution, materialism; and the other way leads to individual freedom, justice, ordered progress, cultural and spiritual idealism.

The great need of the world to-day is for a clear call – a message of light and wisdom. Like the Israelites of old, the nations in the wilderness (p39) have urgent need of a modern Moses and a second pillar of fire. For us the Brotherhood of Man is the one clear call; Theosophy the pillar of fire, the light undimmed and undimmable.

The unity of life, the kinship of all the peoples of the earth, their common path of life and their common goal of perfection, this is the message which the world needs to-day. The Theosophical Society which Krishnamurti so constantly denounces was brought into existence for the express purpose of delivering that message. Its members throughout the world are doing their best to fulfil that purpose.

Acquisition belongs to the past, contribution to the present and the future. Competition, strife, war belong to the past. Co-operation, friendship, mutual service – these are the watchwords of today and to-morrow. Ours the task as theosophists of letting this light shine, of giving this message, of sounding forth this watchword. Let us be faithful to our mission. Whilst studying with open mind every comprehensible presentation of truth, let us not be led aside from the great truth which already we have received by any authority however high.

The Great Work calls to-day as of old. Theosophists will help the world at this time by standing firm in their beliefs, by not wavering under test. Some of us – many thousands of us – have discovered within ourselves a well-spring of life, of happiness, of inspiration. Theosophy has led us to this discovery. Ours in our turn to lead humanity to its own fount of life within, to its own happiness, and to its own truth as we have been led. For do we not know full well that Theosophy is the hope of the world?

We do not fear any challenge to the truths (p40) which we have made our own. In this book I have presumed to challenge the challenger; but I do so with respect and with hope in the future. I have not read the reports of the 1938 talks at Omen. Perhaps in them a comprehensible and constructive message will be given to a humanity in direst need and to the many individuals who to-day are ardently seeking the light. (p41)

5. ORGANISATIONS.

Krishnamurti is at least consistent in one respect – his general and trenchant condemnation of organisations for the dissemination of doctrines, of societies, orders, ceremonials.

The sweeping nature of this condemnation of all organisations for the spreading of spiritual ideas and spiritual life cannot, in my opinion, be justified. The Solar System itself is such an organisation. The Solar Logos must be regarded both as a great Organiser and as a great Ceremonialist.

Just as a wireless receiving set is essential for the receipt of broadcasts or a brain to receive thought, so are world religions essential to the general physical receipt and dissemination of spiritual teachings. Granted, any individual sufficiently advanced, can receive these teachings direct, can, in fact, discover them for himself. The masses, however, cannot as yet do so; hence the need for their guidance of organised methods of teaching. Krishnamurti is himself the centre and the light of an organisation which collects and publishes his authentic teachings concerning self-illumination and the "pathless Reality."

The fact that the organisation itself – or rather its human constituents – tends to become more important than the revealed truths, to be used for the benefit of its officers rather than for humanity, and eventually crystallises the truths and changes them until they are almost unrecognisable – all these evidences of human limitation and error do not do away with the value of such vehicles in the beginning.

Every movement which comes into existence as a vehicle for truth in any aspect does some (p42) good, leads some souls to light, serves as a starting place from which some minds set forth on the great search. If only one mind receives illumination the organisation has been worthwhile. For the true illumination of a single mind is of incalculable value to the whole of humanity.

In this chapter I propose to examine and discuss in detail Krishnamurti's condemnation of organisations. I have chosen Freemasonry as my subject, looking carefully into it in the light of such condemnation. First let us examine the setting of modern Freemasonry, which is chiefly the Western World. The picture which the modern world presents is not one which encourages optimism. Human life is lived to-day under conditions of the greatest financial uncertainty, of grave national danger and, therefore, of perpetual fear. The great nations are divided into armed camps and appear to some thinkers to be rushing headlong to their self-created doom. One of the most depressing phenomena of our days is the abject failure either of orthodox religion or of any spirit of idealism to influence world affairs.

What is the solution of the great problem presented by international hatred, fear and greed, and the ever-growing and already colossal armaments which national selfishness and national fear have produced?

Is there a guiding principle, an Ariadne's thread, which can lead individuals and nations out of the maze in which humanity appears to be lost into the freedom and happiness which at heart all men are seeking?

Yes, I personally believe that there is. The modern Ariadne's thread consists of certain age-old, unchanging, basic truths, ignorance and (p43) neglect of which are the cause of all sorrow. Recognition of them is the cure and the sole cure of all human ills.

What are these truths? They are five in number.

First: the fact that in his real Self man is a spiritual being. His body is a temple in which he is incarnate. The body is not the man himself; it is but a garment of flesh which he dons at birth.

Second: the purpose of human life is spiritual unfoldment and this is gradually being achieved as a result of life's experiences.

Third: this unfoldment is made possible by two great natural laws: One is that of re-birth by means of which infinite time and opportunity are available to the ever-living soul. The other law is that of cause and effect, or karma, which, by its operation, is the perpetually active teacher of man. Good deeds bring happiness. Evil deeds bring pain. The inner Self of man, ever aware of this process, constantly linking cause and effect, grows in power, wisdom and knowledge as a result of life's experiences.

Fourth: The great truth of the oneness of life, which in humanity manifests as the unity and solidarity of the human race – the fact of the Brotherhood of Man. This is perhaps the greatest contribution made by Freemasonry to the solution of the present world problems. For Freemasonry aims at the federation of the world into one great universal brotherhood.

Fifth of the basic truths, despite its denial by Krishnamurti, is the sublime purpose of the whole process of creation. This is evolution, and for man its goal is to become "perfect as your father which is in Heaven is perfect." In Masonic terms, the apprentice in life's great workshop is trained (p44) as a craftsman, and later becomes a master of men. Eventually, he becomes a Master-Builder – a conscious co-worker with the Great Architect of the Universe.

Such are the precious truths of life which, though grievously neglected and ignored, are to be found in two places. One is the realm of world religions and world philosophies, the other is that splendid synthesis of both which is Ancient Freemasonry.

What is the convinced and enthusiastic Freemason to say, therefore, when Krishnamurti informs him that it is absolutely impossible for him to acquire true discernment as long as he associates himself with societies or ceremonials?

Is it possible that if Krishnamurti really knew anything about the great realities behind Freemasonry, he would include it in his sweeping condemnations?

At the risk of apparent digression, let us examine this question:

What is Freemasonry? It is at least twofold. It is first: A unique and remarkable method of studying and presenting the above mentioned truths concerning life, death and the "perfection" of the soul of man.

These truths themselves are not unique; they are, indeed, universal. The method of teaching and portraying them in Freemasonry is, however, entirely unique – is, indeed, most remarkable.

Naturally, since Freemasonry is a secret Order, I can do no more than hint that the method consists, in part, of the performance of extremely beautiful and powerful rituals, almost every word and certainly every act of which are pregnant with profound significance and full of power.

True, this significance is largely lost to the (p45) modern Mason. The Co-Masonic Order, however, which admits women to the secrets and rites of Freemasonry, is regarded by many of its members as being especially concerned with the re-discovery

of the inner significance and hidden meanings of the ancient rites, symbols and words, and their re-delivery to a world so sorely in need of them.

In its second aspect, Freemasonry, as we shall see later, is a scientific method of spiritual, cultural, and physical self-training. In both of these aspects the influence of Freemasonry extends far beyond the walls of the Masonic Temple. It affects every aspect of human conduct, leads its brethren to the truly Masonic life, inculcates the development of every moral and civic virtue. For the Masonic life consists of putting into practice in thought and word and deed the grand truths for which Freemasonry stands and upon which from remotest ages it has been founded.

The Craft is indeed a great training ground. Let us look at this aspect of Masonic work. It is of extraordinary interest, for Masonic training is quite unlike and distinct from that to be gained by any other means. In addition to the perfect enactment of ceremonial by voice, gesture and movement, the Mason is called upon to convey through his work both sublime truths and spiritual forces. He gradually learns the art of using the voice effectively. He also acquires great control of the body, develops a certain power and dignity of person, trains and enlarges his mental capacity, gradually attaining mastery of the great powers of the mind. For mental development can be greatly quickened in Freemasonry, especially in Lodges devoted to mindtraining, study and research.

(p46) This reference to research brings me to a personal opinion concerning the peculiar significance of Freemasonry and particularly of Co-Freemasonry at this time. Very soon after becoming a Mason – a very great privilege – it becomes evident to the new initiate that the Order has its own unique contribution to make to the advance of modern science, so closely do the two human activities resemble each other.

Modern science is now penetrating through the illusory appearance of the solidity of matter. Scientific investigation has led the modern physicist to the concept accepted by some scientists of a Directive Mind or Universal Intelligence. Many great scientists of our day have affirmed their belief in the existence of the Major Mind and of an evolutionary purpose behind the slow development of the forms and beings of Nature. Sir James Jeans, in his book, "The Mysterious Universe," says that to him the Universe looks less like a great machine than a great thought, the Thinker behind having a mathematical mind. In summing up his findings, he goes back to the immortal phrase of Plato: "God geometrises." I betray no secrets when I say that this is pure Masonry; for Masonic Science leads its adherents along precisely the same road, teaches them by means of physical sounds, symbols and signs to discover, to tap and release the hidden forces within themselves and within Nature. By contact and co-operation with the Intelligences associated with the great streams of natural energy and by the ritual employment of the will, advanced Masons are able in full consciousness to evoke and release upon the world potent and beneficent spiritual powers. The Mason, if he chooses, can become highly proficient in the science of the spirit. (p47) Profound anatomical, physiological and psychological truths chiefly concerning man, physical and super-physical, are contained within the Masonic Temple, its appointments, officiants, ceremonials and instructions. The human body itself, with its indwelling spiritual ego, is known as a temple, a microcosm, reproducing in miniature the Macrocosmic Temple of the Universe with its material sun and planets and its indwelling Logos or Creative Word.

This, in my opinion, is one of the great secrets of Freemasonry. I am, however, guilty of no betrayal, since the self-same teaching is to be found in the most ancient philosophical literature, much of it written by Initiates of those mystery-temples of ancient civilisations of which modern Freemasonry is the direct descendant.

Freemasonry in its scientific and theurgic aspect may, therefore, be regarded as a bridge between the splendid, though inevitably blind, researches of material science on the one hand, and on the other, discovery and practical application of the great Truths discovered by occult research and revealed in part through religion and philosophy. The building of this bridge is all-important at this critical epoch in world affairs. For to-day moral evolution and ethical and social wisdom lag far behind scientific progress. Everywhere is being recognised the great danger arising from the fact that man is ethically unprepared for so great a bounty of power as the modern chemist and physicist is placing in his hands. Morally and spiritually unawakened, man to-day tends to turn every new scientific discovery to destructive purposes. As a result, we live from day to day under the dread menace of a cataclysmic war, which, if it breaks out, will destroy modern civilisation. (p48) Freemasonry stands for world brotherhood, inculcates the highest private and public morality. It must, therefore, be one of the great bulwarks against the forces of evil and destruction which threaten the modern world. All who join the Order and work for its great ideals

become workers in the cause of human progress, human happiness and world peace.

I am aware that whilst interest in ceremonial, both private as in Masonry and public as in religion, pageantry and military displays, is on the increase, there are large numbers of people who instinctively dislike ritual, especially in association with the approach of man to God. Apparently Krishnamurti is one of them.

I sympathise with and believe that I understand this natural dislike of ritual which some people experience. I realise that for certain temperaments approach to the great spiritual realities is best made in silence. I agree with those who think that the Psalmist did not so much utter an injunction as propound a law in his words: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that even such an approach, to be successful, demands a certain mental mechanism and certain physical conditions – is, in fact, governed by certain laws. These laws would also appear to govern the response from Divinity to the aspiring soul of man. Thus the whole process of prayer is in essence a science. It is, indeed, the greatest and most ancient of all sciences, the science of the soul of man.

Freemasonry, I here affirm – though the majority of masculine Masons would probably demur – is a branch of that ancient science. For Freemasonry is one of the means whereby the (p49) soul is trained to unfold and use its mental and intuitional wings, to make the great flight "from the alone, to the Alone."

The wise man does not, therefore, turn away from or condemn the ritual method of approach to God. If he is truly wise he will recognise that both the Solar System and his own body are temples of an indwelling God. He will see in the creation and ordered evolutionary progression of the Universe a solemn ritual, and in all life the performance of a great ceremonial. When he realises that the great creative rituals of Freemasonry are founded upon the basic principles which govern the creation of a Universe, are, indeed, re-enactments by man of the Divine drama of creation, then he no longer turns away too hastily either from the ceremonial road to communion with the Great Architect of the Universe, whether as Being or Principle, or from the ceremonial method of serving "Him."

In the light of these concepts of Freemasonry, all Masons are seen as master-builders in the making – co-workers with the Great Architect of the Universe. One day, by virtue of the training and spiritual quickening received in Freemasonry, they will become master-builders – an attainment which is symbolically referred to and actually mentioned in certain Masonic Rites. Indeed, in one degree the Mason is referred to as having symbolically attained perfection.

At this point it is necessary for me to stress the fact that there is no obligation placed upon any Freemason to accept this mystical concept of the Craft. Even without it the Order remains one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all earthly institutions; for is it not founded upon the sublime ideals of brotherly love, relief and (p50) truth, which imply both a recognition of the Brotherhood of Life and the Masonic ideal of brotherly love and brotherly service to all men, especially to those in need?

Not only is a great field of charitable ministration opened up to every Mason, but in addition, the artist in every man is evoked and developed by the stately beauty of Masonic ceremonial. Similarly, the scientist in man responds to the order and exactitude of all Masonic labours and of the truly Masonic life.

Thus, seeing how wide is the appeal and how great the opportunity offered by membership in the Freemasonic Order, I personally cannot assent to Krishnamurti's condemnations.

I am, of course, not blind to the fact that there are abuses of Masonic position and misuses of Masonic office and method. Man at this stage of his evolution is prone to error. Human weakness and blindness are to be found in the Masonic Order as everywhere else. If it were not so, there would be no need for religious and moral instruction of any kind; everyone would be completely enlightened; Krishnamurti's mission itself would have no point. A sweeping condemnation on this account must proceed either from a narrow intolerance or a profound ignorance of the subject.

Is it possible for a great reformer such as Krishnamurti to display tolerance? May it not be necessary for him to be so one-pointed in the inculcation and practice of the particular aspect of truth and particular method of self-illumination which he promulgates, that he denies the existence and validity of every other aspect and every other method?

Perhaps so. But the ordinary individual who has to take life as he finds it, who is constantly (p51) faced with innumerable practical problems, physical, emotional and intellectual – such a person is surely to be both understood and encouraged if he accepts help and guidance from every available source. His inner light, his inner strength and his courage may be best evoked by the sacraments and rituals of a church, by the ceremonials and ideals of the Freemasonic Order or by a life of service to the world. Yet Krishnamurti would appear to condemn, lock, stock and barrel, such an individual, the movements which assist him and the mode of life to which they have led him.

Nevertheless, a man can only use such intelligence as he has at the moment developed. For myself, I prefer carefully to examine the various aids available to the human being in the confusion and stress of life as it is lived to-day. Even if I find faults in all of them, I would not destroy one single one of them which has brought light and strength and courage if only to one human being. I cannot believe that there is only one way to that light – Krishnamurti's way.

I prefer to found my life and thought upon the statement attributed to the Lord Shri Krishna: "Mankind comes to Me along many roads, and upon whatsoever road a man approacheth Me, on that road do I welcome him; for all roads are Mine." *

Lastly, if it is urged that ceremonials and orders are not essential to the fulfilment of life, I reply: "No intelligent person ever said they were."

* Bhagavad Gita.

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6. EFFORTS OF COMPREHENSION.

An intense and prolonged effort of the mind to get behind the words of Krishnamurti, to arrive somewhere, produces strange mental sensations. I confess that, apart from rare moments of illumination for which I am profoundly grateful, I find myself for the most part in a maze of somewhat resentful hopelessness. Resentful, when individuals whom I respect and love are vilified and when proven truths are denied. Hopeless, when long-continued study fails to elucidate the teachings.

On occasion, however, one has the impression of moving in a very rare atmosphere, a sort of summit-of-Everest consciousness. The very altitude makes everything seem elusive, intangible. Understanding seems near sometimes. One listens or reads on expectant, hoping for the re-solution, for the emergent formula or synthesis; but, alas! it seldom, if ever, comes. It is lost – at least for me – in general and sweeping denunciations of some very beautiful things in life, of basic and educative experiences of my own. Premises are thus often unacceptable and this vitiates the conclusions. Always expectant, always hoping, one so often experiences not illumination, but profound disappointment. This may be one's own fault. By his condemnatory attitude to all other spiritual and philosophic teachings than his own, Krishnamurti leads one to expect something utterly different, something unique and new. He seems always to be promising a great illumination, and this it is which produces the heightened sense of expectancy. When after days of listening or hours of reading – every allowance being made (p53) for the stupidity with which he charges those who cannot understand him – nothing happens, disappointment becomes inevitable. The mind falls away from the sustained effort to understand that which for it proves incomprehensible.

Such are the psychological processes which Krishnamurti induces in me. He will say, no doubt, that this is my fault, not his; that my mind is cluttered up with beliefs, ideals and ideas which completely prevent me from using it intelligently.

I have examined this postulated charge, and find that there are four conditions which I demand before I can listen receptively to' an exposition of anyone's ideas. These are: – First: That people whom I love and revere shall not be unjustly vilified. Second: Reason and logic must not be outraged by self-contradictions and arguments based on premises which are patently unsound. Third: The fact and the value of basic interior experiences, intellectual and spiritual, must not be denied to me. Fourth: I must be permitted to challenge and seek logical bases for dogmatic utterances.

Surely these four conditions are not unfair. Yet whether listening to or reading Krishnamurti or discussing his teachings with those who proclaim them as a new light, these conditions are never met. In consequence, I find that one Beethoven Symphony, for example, does more for me in an hour than my seven years of study of Krishnamurti's later teachings have done.

One great difficulty is that words are not used as men ordinarily use them. Furthermore, affirmations are constantly made which contradict proven knowledge; seem to display both (p54) prejudice and ignorance. The presence of personal bitterness shakes one's confidence in the value of the illumination which Krishnamurti claims for himself. All this has been going on for some fourteen years, and we are still no nearer to comprehension. It almost seems a pity that Krishnamurti began his later mission by first denying the validity of the accumulated wisdom of the ages; and, second, by implying that he had discovered and was going to give to the world the only true light. For it is this which produces expectancy of revolutionary teachings and causes the consequent disillusionment when so little emerges.

Even so, I am prepared to go on trying. For I have found that by resisting the tendency mentally to leap up and deny, one does sometimes come very near to grasping something of value.

Here is an example of an utterance which, whilst almost comprehensible, nevertheless eludes sharply defined apprehension. If it rang true through and through it would solve every problem both of the individual and the race. It may be true, but this expression of it somehow fails to convince – at least, with the admitted limitations of my mind. Question: "How can one be free of the primitive reactions of which you speak?"

Krishnamurti: "The very desire to be free creates its own limitation. These primitive or ignorant reactions create conflicts, disturbances and sorrow in your life, and by getting rid of them you hope to acquire something else – happiness, bliss, peace, and so on. So you put to me the question: How am I to get rid of these reactions? That is, you want me to give you a (p55) method, lay down a system, a discipline, a mode of conduct.

"If you understand that there is no separate consciousness apart from the 'I' process; that the 'I' is consciousness itself; that ignorance creates its own limitations, and that the 'I' is but the result of its own action, then you will not think in terms of denudation and acquisition.

"Take, for example, the reaction towards nationalism. If you think about it, you will see that this reaction is ignorant and very harmful, not only to yourself, but to the world. Then you will ask me: 'How is one to get rid of it?' Now, why do you want to get rid of it? When you perceive why you want to get rid of it, you will then discern how it has come into being – artificially, with its many cruel implications; and when you deeply comprehend it, then there is not a conscious effort to get rid of this ignorant reaction; it disappears of itself.

"In the same way, if mind-heart is bound by fears, beliefs, which are so dominant, potent, overwhelming that they pervert clear perception, it is no good making great efforts to get rid of them. First you have to be conscious of them; and instead of wanting to get rid of them, find out why they exist. If you try to free yourself from them, you will unconsciously create or accept other and perhaps more subtle fears and beliefs. But when you perceive how they have come into being, through the desire for security, comfort, then that very perception will dissolve them. This requires great alertness of mind-heart.

"The struggle exists between those established values and the ever changing, indefinite values, between the fixed and the free movement of life, (p56) between standards, conventionalities, accumulated memories, and that which has no fixed abode. Instead of trying to pursue the unknown, examine what you have, the known, the established prejudices, limitations. Comprehend their significance; then they disappear like the mists of a morning. When you perceive that what you thought was a snake in the grass is only a rope, you are no longer afraid, there is no longer a struggle, an overcoming. And when, through deep discernment, we perceive that these limitations are self-created, then our attitude towards life is no longer one of conquering, of wanting to be freed through some method or miracle, of seeking comprehension through another. Then we will realise for ourselves that though this process of ignorance appears to have no beginning, it has an end." *

I have read this reply many times, have indeed pondered upon it for a long time. I find that its full significance eludes me. The concept of ignorance, for example, is confusing; for that which exists and has no beginning must be eternal. Therefore, it can have no end. Furthermore, ignorance is hardly an entity, a positive power; surely it is a negation.

Nevertheless, in this reply, Krishnamurti comes very near to "letting me through." For one perceives in this teaching a resemblance to the inner significance of the account of Christ stilling the tempest. The disciples – every man – did not fight the

storm of life and passion. They awoke the sleeping Passenger, symbol of the Divine within every man as will, as wisdom and clear perception. Once "He" was awake,

* Ojai Talks, 1936, pp. 21-22. (p57) the storm could not continue to exist. In "His" Presence peace reigned.

But I expect that Krishnamurti would deny vehemently that this was what he intended to convey! He and his followers – with apologies for the word used occasionally, *faute de mieux* – would most probably say that a shallow brain and thought biased by all kinds of fears, beliefs, superstitions, ideals and ideas about Masters could never comprehend. I accept the charge – humbly – and beg for light – but not at the cost of denial either of reason or of what I know to be true.(p58)

7. ESCAPE.

Prominent amongst the reasons for Krishnamurti's denunciation of ideals, disciplines and lives devoted to the service of great causes, is that they are all means of escape. The existence of pure idealism, sacrificial love and selfless service by these condemnations is denied.

This is an example of the excess by which, in my humble opinion, Krishnamurti's teaching is so greatly marred. Perceiving the excesses, repelled by them, one is in danger of casting aside the whole body of his ideas. This I think would be a profound mistake; for even in the extreme statements, one is not infrequently able to perceive more than a germ of truth. Granted, the ideas thus perceived are in no sense new. One has learnt of them in the course of one's theosophical study. Indeed, everything which is comprehensible and rings true in Krishnamurti's utterances is recognisable as part of the Ancient Wisdom.

Krishnamurti's denunciations may apply to some people. But very definitely they do not apply to all. The wise student will use them as a touchstone to his own character and conduct, thereby gaining much of self-purification and reorientation.

The brand of "means of escape, fear, search, reward" which Krishnamurti appears to place upon all ideals and all idealists, whilst falsely applied, nevertheless can lead the thought to a great truth.

One's theosophical studies show one that the true fruits of life's experiences can only be harvested when they are accepted, entered into in their fullness, examined until their full significance is indelibly impressed upon the consciousness. (p59) This is, of course, true of both joys and sorrows. But it would seem to be especially true of sorrow. If those in suffering and sorrow would be wise, they would not, as Krishnamurti would seem to say, run away from these experiences. The waters of such sorrow must be allowed to flow over one, even if one is temporarily engulfed. For in the process of acceptance, examination, and even of being temporarily overwhelmed, the true essence of the experience is distilled within the crucible of the heart.

This essence is peace born of comprehension, and he who is able to accept all pain, especially mental pain, with understanding will always find his peace. He who runs away will ever find escape impossible, peace unattainable. This truth is most beautifully expressed in Francis Thompson's wonderful poem, "The Hound of Heaven." The word "Hound" in the title may be taken as a verb meaning "hunt."

Krishnamurti expresses this most beautifully – at least, I think he does – as follows: "When you begin to suffer, do not say, I must get rid of this or that want or cause, but silently observe, without denial or acceptance (I cannot agree to "without acceptance" – G.H.), and out of this choiceless awareness, want, with its fears and illusions, begins to yield place to intelligence. This intelligence is life itself, and is not conditioned by the compulsion of want."

This idea seems to be susceptible of extension beyond the individual who suffers. There is only one Divine life, and when, intelligently and without morbidity, we unite ourselves with our own suffering, we unite ourselves with the suffering of all. We become one with them, and in so doing find the peace of the Everlasting Arms – (p60) or the Divine compassion without and within – into which we sink, and in which, as we then know, the world is forever safe.

This is a mystical experience, which comes as the waters of pain and sorrow are allowed to close over one. In the utter loneliness which accompanies this profound experience, nothing external can aid one. In this complete aloneness beneath the waters of sorrow, comes not only the great peace, but the great illumination of one-ness. The illusion of separateness is gone

for ever afterwards and with it the illusion of death. A self-conscious awareness of immortality is born out of such an experience. Thus we see the value of life's experiences – Krishnamurti's positive denial notwithstanding.

Theosophy tells us that it is in experience frankly faced, studied, accepted, that light is found. Pain borne without retreat and without reproach either to life and the pain or to its personal agent, if one exists, karma accepted without bitterness, fear or weakness – in this valiant acceptance, free from the slightest trace of despair or rebellion, lies the way of light.

In one of his most beautiful and revealing utterances, Krishnamurti also expresses this as follows: – "As you do not wish to change a lovely form, the glow after sunset, the vision of a tree in a field, so also do not obstruct the movement of sorrow. Let it ripen, for in its own process of fulfilment there is comprehension. When you are aware of the wound of sorrow, without acceptance, resignation or denial, without artificially inviting it, then suffering awakens the flame of creative intelligence."

There speaks the poet, the seer, the illumined. In such phrases of pure beauty and deep wisdom, Krishnamurti places all lovers of beauty and of truth heavily in his debt. Here we see how true in one sense is Krishnamurti's affirmation that all men, irrespective of evolutionary stature, could enter by this way into this light. Nothing objective bars the way. This liberation is truly available to all. The difficulty is – and we had better face it – that all men are not able to accept suffering without an attempt to evade it and without bitterness or reproach. For such an acceptance demands a certain level of development, a certain almost exalted mental attitude. And to this the average man cannot attain. Furthermore, it is folly, I submit, either to expect him to do so or to condemn him for not doing so. If you do, you break him. His memory drives him instinctively to seek escape from all that is unpleasant; for he thinks that self-preservation lies that way. Yet both his instinct and his thought are wrong. He needs to be instructed in the meaning, cause and cure of pain. This – pace Krishnamurti – is where Theosophy is of so great a value to humanity. For this – the meaning and purpose of life and all of life's experience – is part of its great message to the world.

All this would seem to be contained in the story of the Baptism of our Lord, in which He voluntarily entered and was submerged in the waters of Jordan – symbol of the sorrows of humanity. He came forth illumined and empowered, as indeed do all who thus receive and welcome the experiences of life.

Such, according to Theosophy, is part of the great secret of the cessation of sorrow. Krishnamurti undoubtedly does at least hint at this secret which in its essence is less a teaching or description than a vivid experience. For the truth is only fully comprehensible to those who have passed through the experiences. Largely by virtue of one's own experience of life, one is on occasion able to receive from Krishnamurti flashes of illumination, to assent to an idea almost with wonder, so great is the light. Sometimes, however rarely, with a thrill of enlightenment one finds arising from the depths of one's own experience an inner spontaneous answer to his words.

But – and here is the special warning I venture to give to all who study him, including myself – because he proves illuminating on occasion, do not let us throw overboard all the happiness, beauty and usefulness which our own religion and philosophy have hitherto brought to us. To do so is the wildest folly, and can lead only to sterility, misery, a darkened life.

Questions put to him demonstrate very clearly that Krishnamurti has led people into this darkness. I speak feelingly, for I have seen and known so many who have made just that mistake. Once radiant, they are now in darkness. Once loving friends to all, they, like Krishnamurti himself, are now scornful and bitter opponents of their old friends and co-workers. Once useful citizens, they are now idle. Not only are they idle, but they scorn those who remain active in the service of city, country and race. Once self-controlled, vegetarian, teetotallers and refined of speech, they now scorn all systematic discipline, eat meat, smoke, take alcohol and are addicted to coarse language. All this is justified by the plea of fuller self-expression. Great is the tragedy of such temporarily ruined lives – a tragedy all too common since Krishnamurti took up his mission. (p63) Are we to estimate him by such fruits of his teaching alone? Not entirely, I submit. There is, however, a test which suffices, and for me is final. That test is the extent to which the teacher displays and evokes the quality of compassion.

True illumination draws the seer nearer to the world, nearer to his brother man and draws his brother man nearer to him. The fact of the oneness of life becomes a living experience. From that experience spring divine love and divine compassion, and at the risk of sounding sentimental I would add, divine sweetness.

Wisdom, be it ever remembered, "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things."

The true teacher comes "not to destroy, but to build," as some fourteen years ago, and apparently with prescience and purpose, we were all forewarned.

To the extent that Krishnamurti or any other both displays and evokes compassion and in the measure in which he "builds," in that measure is he a great teacher.

Some seven years ago Krishnamurti publicly parted company with The Theosophical Society. Since then iconoclasm has been a marked characteristic of his utterances. Is it possible that his life is divided into seven-year cycles, each with its own keynote? If so, a new cycle is now opening. Who knows what it may bring? (p64)

END